

*Focus reading:* 1 Timothy 2:1–7 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=434694030>)

*Other lectionary readings:* Jeremiah 8:18—9:1; Psalm 79:1–9; Luke 16:1–13

*Theme:* Prayerful Living

Bring up the subject of politics, and the conversation can quickly turn ugly. In today's political climate, both public and private discourses are often mean-spirited and devoid of respect. In the midst of this environment, we hear a call to pray for our political leaders. And before we say, "But things were different (as in easier) then, perhaps a refresher is in order. Those who first received these words were living under the control of the Roman Empire. The emperor claimed to be the son of god and demanded that he be worshiped. Subjects were required to make public oaths in front of statues of the emperor. Refusal to do so could result in hard labor, economic consequences, beatings, or death. Why would they pray for such leaders? According to our text, we are to pray for our political leaders because God is the God of ALL people, and God's desire is that all people live in peace, a peace for which Jesus gave his life. No one stands outside of God's reach. The love and redemptive power of God, as expressed in Christ's sacrifice, reaches to all people. Are our prayers for "everyone" (vs. 1) or only for ourselves, our loved ones, or those who "deserve" our prayers? When we pray for "everyone," we may find ourselves acting in ways that seek to make peace and justice a reality for all.

#### PRAYER CHAIN

Make a prayer chain to use with your children. Cut equally sized strips of paper that can be wrapped and glued around one another to make a chain (like the ones we made as children for our Christmas trees). On each strip of paper, write the name of someone for whom you can pray. Add a new name each day, going back to the start of the chain to continue to prayer for the ones first named. Be sure to include leaders and those with whom you might not always agree.

#### PRAYING IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Try different kinds of prayer. Use body movement in prayer. Sculpt play dough while you pray. Draw your prayer. Sing your prayer. Walk and pray in the labyrinth. Pray silently. Write your prayer in a journal. Just as we all have different personalities and gifts, people differ in the expressions of prayer that they find most meaningful. Help your child to experiment, to see that there are a variety of ways to pray, and to discover which type of prayer is meaningful to them at this point in their lives.

#### PRAYER

Loving God,  
Hear us as we pray for leaders (add names or pray silently),  
for people everywhere (add places or pray silently),  
and for those who are in special need of your love (add names or pray silently),  
that we might all live in peace.  
Amen.

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